

REMARKS

Perfection of Priority

The **present application** is a national stage application based on PCT/JP03/08903, which was filed on July 14, 2003; and claims priority to Japanese patent application 2002-248504, **filed on August 28, 2002**. Applicants file concurrently herewith an English translation of JP '504 along with a statement that the translation is accurate.

Outstanding Rejections

The rejections of any one of Claims 1-8: (1) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over the disclosure of US 6,951,609 ("US 609"); (2) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) over the disclosure of JP 2002-306976 ("JP '976") or WO 02/083771 ("WO '771"); and (3) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over the disclosure of US 2003/0189005 ("US '005") or US 2004/0122117 ("US '117") are respectfully traversed.

The present application has a priority date that antedates all of the above-identified patent documents, as evidenced by the following Table.

Publication	Pub. Date	Filed
<u>US '609 Patent Family</u>		
US 2003/0173282	2003-09-18	2003-03-14
US 6951609 (US '609)	2005-10-04	2003-03-14
JP 2003-266069	2003-09-24	2002-03-18
EP 1346953	2003-09-24	2003-03-18
<u>JP '976, US '005, & WO '771 Patent Family</u>		
WO 02083771 (WO '771)	2002-10-24	2002-04-03
US 2003/0189005 (US '005)	2003-10-09	2002-12-13
JP 2003-166982	2003-06-13	2002-08-06
JP 2002-346392	2002-12-03	2001-05-22
JP 2002-306976 (JP '976)	2002-10-22	2001-04-13
EP 1386938	2006-01-25	2002-04-03
EP 1386938	2004-02-04	2002-04-03
<u>US '117 Patent Family</u>		
WO 02/083770	2002-10-24	2002-03-28
US 2004/0122117 (US '117)	2004-06-24	2003-10-10
TW 0589335	2004-06-01	2002-04-10
EP 1384746	2004-01-28	2002-03-28

Application No. 10/510,964
Reply to Office Action of December 5, 2005

It is noted that the priority date of the present application of August 28, 2002, antedates all of the above-listed publications by about two months, (*cf.* JP '976: publication date of October 22, 2002). It is believed that none of the references applied in the outstanding Office Action qualify as prior art under any subsection of 35 U.S.C. § 102. Accordingly, it is kindly requested that the Examiner withdraw these rejections.

The same holds true for the outstanding rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). It is requested that the Examiner withdraw this rejection.

It is believed that the present application is now in a condition for allowance. Should the Examiner deem that a personal or telephonic interview would be helpful in advancing this application toward allowance, he is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the below-listed telephone number.

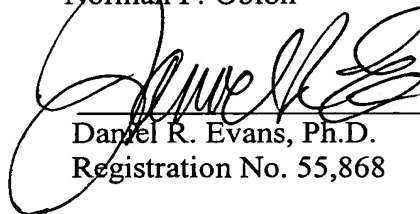
Respectfully submitted,

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